

adopted, and equally forcible arguments are urged. In its defence. Thus, when the Wabondei of Eastern Africa are about to build a house, they take care to cut the posts for it when the moon is on the increase; for they say that posts cut when the moon is wasting away would soon rot, whereas posts cut while the moon is waxing are very durable.<sup>1</sup> The same rule is observed for the same reason in some parts of Germany.<sup>2</sup>

But the partisans of the ordinarily received opinion have sometimes supported it by another reason, which introduces us to the second of those fallacious appearances by which men have been led to regard the moon as the cause of growth in plants. From observing rightly that dew falls most thickly on cloudless nights, they inferred wrongly that it was caused by the moon, a theory which the poet Alcman expressed in mythical form by saying that dew was a daughter of Zeus and the moon.<sup>3</sup> Hence the ancients concluded that the moon is the great source of moisture, as the sun is the great source of heat.<sup>4</sup> And as the humid power of the moon was assumed to be greater when the planet was waxing than when it was waning, they thought that timber cut during the increase of the luminary would be saturated with moisture, whereas timber cut in the wane would be comparatively dry. Hence we are told that in antiquity carpenters would reject timber felled when the moon was growing or full, because they believed that such timber teemed with sap;<sup>5</sup> and in the Vosges at the present day people allege that wood cut at the new moon does not dry.<sup>6</sup> We have seen that the same reason Is

assigned for  
the same practice in Colombia.<sup>7</sup> In the Hebrides  
peasants

Street, W., 12th May 1912. Mr. <sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Qitaest.*  
*Conviv.* iii. 10.

Schloss adds that "as a matter of 3; Macrobius,  
*Saturn.* viL 16. See practical observation, timber, etc., further, W. H. Roscher,  
*U6er Selene* should only be felled when the moon *und VcwancUes* (Leipsic, 1890), pp.

is waning. This has been stated to me 49 *sqq.* not only by natives, but also by English \* Plutarch and

*Macrobius*, *ll.cc.* mining engineers of high repute, who Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 223, xx. 15 have done work in Colombia." Aristotle, *Problemati*, xxiv. 14,

p. <sup>1</sup> O. Baumann, *Usambara und seine 937 B, 3 sqq. ed. I. Bekker* (Berlin).

*Nachbargebiete* (Berlin, 1891), p. 125. <sup>5</sup> Macrobius and Plutarch, *ll.cc.*

<sup>2</sup> Montanus, *Die deitsche Volksfoste, 6 L. F. Sauve, Folk-lore des llautes-* *Volksbrüche und deutscher Volksglaube* <sup>7</sup> Above, p. 136.

<sup>8</sup> Vosges, p. 5- p. 128.